

REMARKS:

Claims 35, 37, 38, 40-45, 47, 51 and 113-115 are pending in which claims 35 and 113 are independent claims.

Claims Rejections under 35 USC 103

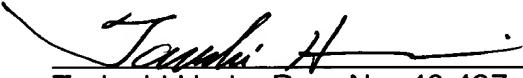
Claims 35, 37-39, 41-45, 47, 51 and 113 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rueda (6,157,727) in view of Takebayashi et al. (5,577,165). Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are patentable over the cited references.

Rueda issued on December 5, 2000. The present application was filed in the USPTO on October 16, 2000, which claims priority to Japanese Application Nos. H11-037558 and H11-037559 both filed in Japan on February 11, 1999. Therefore, Rueda could qualify as prior art against the present application under 35 USC 102(e), and the 102(e) date of Rueda is May 22, 1998.

Attached is a 131 declaration by the inventor of the present application, Toshihiko Oba, who declares that he conceived his invention prior to May 22, 1998 and continued his efforts to reduce the invention to practice until February 11, 1999, the filing date of the Japanese applications. In view of the attached 131 declaration by the inventor, the present rejection based on Rueda is moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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